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FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9788
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1967
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1944
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1870
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS 1189
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 1417
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 2046
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2012
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1804
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0148
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2021
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1604
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1623
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1774
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1925
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1406
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SUBJECT: OSCE OK IN TAJIKISTAN - AMBASSADOR FINLEY MEETS WITH TAJIK
FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: A) DUSHANBE 206, B) DUSHANBE 262

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. During their meeting March 7 with Tajik Foreign Minister Zaripov, U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Ambassador Julie Finley, and Ambassador Jacobson discussed the future of the OSCE in Tajikistan. The Tajik Permanent Representative in Vienna has expressed dissatisfaction with the work of the OSCE here, and the Foreign Minister has proposed to downgrade the OSCE presence in Dushanbe to a project office (ref A). However, during his meeting with Ambassador Finley, Zaripov offered a more positive spin. He explained that the Tajik government wants to retain the OSCE's programs in democracy and human rights, but bring up to the same level a focus on economic development issues. Zaripov also elaborated on his proposal (ref A) to move a branch of the OSCE Economic Forum, currently based in Prague, to Dushanbe. Ambassadors Finley and Jacobson also pressed Zaripov on a draft law on associations that would severely restrict the ability of non-governmental organizations to operate in Tajikistan. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Tajikistan is not anti-OSCE, Zaripov asserted, remarking that "Tajikistan is very different from Uzbekistan." He also said Tajikistan's views differed from "Putin's speech in Germany," where Putin questioned the OSCE's effectiveness and goals. On the contrary, the Foreign Ministry's aim is to increase the OSCE's activity in Tajikistan by adding economic programs to facilitate infrastructure development. Zaripov argued that recent achievements in the country argue for the

Tajik government and OSCE to update the OSCE Center's mandate which was established in 2002.

¶3. (SBU) Zaripov also requested that the OSCE create a structure in Dushanbe to deal with regional economic and environmental issues, especially water and energy, roads and communications, and movement of people and goods across borders. The unit would operate as a sub-structure to the Economic/Environmental Forum in Prague, and would provide a better vantage point for the OSCE to understand and address regional economic issues. (Note: Zaripov walked this proposal back from earlier Tajik requests to relocate the entire OSCE Economic Forum to Dushanbe. End note.) Ambassadors Finley and Jacobson both supported the idea of discussing this proposal further. The Ambassadors also noted that they would like to see the OSCE more involved in Afghanistan, working on border security and training, and cross-border irrigation and water issues.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador Jacobson noted that a seriously flawed draft law on public associations (ref B) passed the lower house of parliament in the dark of night with no consultations with the international community or Tajik civil society. She said that Tajikistan has a history of respect for working with non-governmental organizations, and that this law would be a giant step backwards. (Note: Ambassador Jacobson reiterated this point in the short press conference following the meeting, prompting a frantic ministry official to signal that the interview was over. End note.) Zaripov requested that the Embassy submit its particular objections to the law in writing to the government, which post did by diplomatic note on March 9. (Note: Ambassador shared the note with European Union Ambassadors March 12; they are planning to submit similar notes. End note.)

¶5. (SBU) Zaripov raised and supported the issue of the Kazakh chairmanship of the OSCE in 2009, arguing that today's newly

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configured OSCE, with more countries and partner nations east of Vienna, should allow for Central Asian leadership. Ambassador Finley replied that while the U.S. has an excellent relationship with Kazakhstan, the OSCE is more than a political/military and economic organization, and Kazakhstan's lack of progress on human dimension issues prevents the United States from supporting Kazakhstan's request. She noted that the U.S. supports Kazakhstan's aspirations, and we continue to provide Kazakhstan assistance so they can improve their performance on political and human rights issues.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The U.S. Ambassadors welcomed Zaripov's assurances on the future of the OSCE in Tajikistan, although others in the Tajik government may not share his positive assessment of the OSCE's role, and Zaripov's remarks were clearly pitched to his audience. While the OSCE Center has stagnated here over the past year, due in part to absent or unengaged leadership, Ambassador Finley pressed Zaripov for time to give the newly arrived Charge and incoming Head of Center a chance to turn things around. The OSCE can play a vital development role here if it can focus on all three pillars of the OSCE mandate. END COMMENT.
JACOBSON